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NOTES AND ABSTRACTS

Social Improvement in the Light of Modern Biology.—What light does biological science in its present stage of development throw upon the problem of social improvement? Biologists say, "Permanent progress is a question of breeding rather than of pedagogics; a matter of gametes, not of training." Nevertheless the problem is one primarily for sociologists rather than for biologists. It involves two questions: (1) What kind of society is good, either absolutely or relatively to some other kind? (2) By what means is the desired kind of society most likely to be brought about? The former question is wholly ethical and not to be dealt with here. Biology is concerned only with the second which subdivides into three problems: (a) Can the qualities of subsequent generations be improved by changes in the environment of the present generation, unaccompanied by any other change? (b) Can they be improved by changes in respect of parentage, unaccompanied by any other change? (c) In actual practice, when these two classes of change cannot be really separated, what course ought a statesman to pursue? These three problems are considered in order.

(a) The answer here turns partly on the problem of inheritance of acquired characteristics. The conclusion is that the original properties of a child are not likely to be affected to any important extent by the circumstances in which the parents' lives have been passed. "Education is to man what manure is to a pea." Granting this, the sociologist replies, "The entity which biology declares to be unaffected by ancestral environment is a different entity from that to which the conception of [social] progress applies. The goodness to which the social reformer looks is that of concrete men and women, and not of original properties, which play a secondary part. Among other elements of great importance, ancestral environment *is* included. It acts in two ways—directly, as in the environment of the mother during pregnancy; indirectly, in its reaction upon the current environment through the world of ideas, the economic, aesthetic, etc., conditions socially transmitted. Here is a means of progress entirely independent of breeding and gametes.

(b) Those characteristics of parents which have not been acquired tend to be inherited. Our problem here is one of practice: is our knowledge sufficient to enable this fact to be successfully utilized for purposes of social improvement? It may be said that, while the general results are known, there is not sufficient quantitative knowledge "to justify legislative action except in extreme cases." These extreme cases are represented by various recommendations to authoritatively restrain propagation among the obviously unfit by means of segregation or sterilization.

(c) The so-called lower classes are reproducing as compared with the higher classes to an extent much more than proportionate to their numbers, and increasing so. In so far as these children of the poor are molded into finished persons by a relatively bad environment, this growing proportion is bad for the community. This injury might conceivably be removed by state amelioration of con-

ditions. But, secondly, does this relatively high rate of reproduction among the lower classes necessarily imply such a rate among bad original properties? Perhaps, yes. For example, a relatively high reproductive rate among those who have remained poor implies a form of selection that discriminates against the original properties that promote economic success. The statesman may seek a remedy by attacking directly either environment or parentage. As to the latter our knowledge is indefinite. To give exclusive attention to the former threatens in the long run the breeding out of intelligence and other desirable qualities. But some things may be done. Negatively, the state may discourage unlimited child-bearing among the poor by requiring from the parents a reasonable sum for maintenance of the children. Positively, persons of civic worth might upon some objective test have their salaries increased at marriage and at the birth of each child. A more radical recommendation, diminishing the number of economic checks to child-bearing in general, so as to encourage it among the better grades of working-people, is open to three serious objections: First, it would still increase the proportion of children born to prudent workers relatively to that of professional and upper classes; secondly, it would encourage hard and mercenary marriages; thirdly, the evidence of poor-law history is against the idea. It would be better to restrict the families of the submerged tenth.—A. C. Pigou, *Economic Journal*, September, 1907.

L. L. B.

Unemployment. — [Notes on the present English situation.] Unemployment is not caused [primarily] by bad weather, personal defect, etc., but there is a constant margin of people without work as a result of the present competitive commercial system. The present palliatives are insufficient to cure the evil. The crying need is for a national department of public works, which should have absolute control of all main roads of the country, of the reclamation and protection of foreshores, of crown lands, with power of purchase and improvement (compulsorily if necessary) of all waste land, power to establish labor colonies—for vagrants, for able work-house inmates, for the ordinary unemployed—with the hope of ultimate independence for the men so employed. This last should be for those unable or unwilling to go to public works direct, and might ultimately lead to small holdings in the nature of co-operative communities operated under expert advice. This system would obviate the present expensive methods of providing employment by borough and town councils.

Beyond this, and even more fundamental requirements obviously are reduced hours, raised age limit, mental and moral protection for young laborers, expansion of the area of municipal employment, and abolition of national and municipal and private (corporate) casual labor. These results however cannot be expected at once.

Agriculture is the only English industry not overdone. To make it profitable only better methods and nationally organized system of transit are necessary. Under such conditions market gardening, fruit-culture, and dairy farming pay well, as has been shown by a number of communities organized on this plan. With proper encouragement the home market may be supplied with home products, instead of drawing from the poorer soil and climate of Denmark, the present chief source of supply. The prime requirements for the solution of the

problem of the unemployed is a reorganization of agriculture and a changed governmental attitude towards the question of land tenure.—G. Lansbury, *Economic Review*, July, 1907.
L. L. B.

Notes on the Takelma Indians of Southwestern Oregon.—A brief systematic study of a higher savage tribe, illustrating most of the general phases of primitive life and culture. Describes habitat and linguistic position; neighboring tribes and descriptive place names; language (briefly); food, vegetable and animal, and the connection with fishing and hunting methods; implements and utensils, also games; habitations; clothing and adornment, especially of shells and tattooing customs; numeral system; social organization with scheme of relationships, naming, injury and vengeance and blood money; war and war implements; puberty and marriage ceremonies, courtship, parental choice, wife purchase, menstrual dances and sex taboos, child purchase from the wife's father; mortuary customs, corpse decoration, mourning, burial of valuables with the dead. Religion and mythology are not treated.—Edward Sapir, *American Anthropologist*, April-June, 1907.
L. L. B.

Der Geschichtsmaterialismus als Kulturphilosophie. Ein philosophisches Programm.—The recent tendency among socialist writers to adopt the Marxian point of view as a rather dogmatic and peculiar standpoint, is decried by Stanislaus Brzozowski in *Die neue Zeit*, of May 4, 1907. To him the Marxian way of looking at reality is not one out of many points of view which can be chosen arbitrarily for the interpretation of reality, but it is the scientific and critical interpretation of all social phenomena. The Marxian or materialistic philosophical standpoint is nothing else but a method of investigation into the works of mankind—moral, legal, scientific, and aesthetic. The value of this method has been proven in that it has solved and is solving consciously those very problems which mankind has been solving blindly and in a haphazard manner. The work of this materialistic interpretation of history will have been completed when behind each element of social production we will be shown the figure of the living man who has produced it, and the values of life will be shown in their significance. Particular emphasis is laid upon the fact that this is a conscious method of interpretation as opposed to any other blind and unforeseeing. It is also this interpretation of history and reality which has disclosed to us the real foundation of all values, namely labor. Even the philosophical problem of thinking and being is solved by showing that thinking influences the being of mankind in so far as it acts upon the productivity of labor. Labor is this element which is dependent both upon thinking and being in the same time. It is the world which has become man, the problem of the philosophers. It is the act of projection of the absolute—not-I through the I of which Fichte is speaking. Here is the moment of objectivation of the subject, here is born the idea of Hegel. Labor is Hegel's idea in plain language. It is mental-subjective—this is clear. It is in the same time extra-mental. Labor is what man can make persistent outside of himself. It is the only human language to which being does give an answer.
M. S. H.

Optimistic Economics and Scientific Economics.—By distribution of wealth, the economists mean determination of the price of services. They seek to find out how the prices of the services rendered by man, by capital and by

land are established in the market under a régime of free competition. This free competition constantly tends to enable each unit of capital, of labor, and of land to secure a part of the common product equal to the value created by each one of them. The economists have often seemed to believe that this theory of the price of services contained the whole question of the distribution of wealth. By considering the situation in relation to things, and not to persons, they have for a long time obscured the whole theory of the real distribution of wealth. We will treat only incidentally the problem of the proportional division of revenues, but primarily will consider the relation of the two problems: the determination of the price of services, and the distribution of revenues among individuals.

A "just" distribution can be considered only from the point of view of the persons whom it affects. The fact that the services of capital, of labor, and of land tend to receive a sum corresponding exactly to the value which they create, does not at all prove that each individual in society, who is productive, receives the portion which agrees with our idea of distributive justice. To find the revenue of the individual, even in a state of equilibrium, it is necessary to introduce a new element: the amount of services possessed by each person. This consists of two factors: first, the division of property between individuals; second, the division of force, ability, intelligence, etc., between individuals. To be able to declare that the distribution of wealth is just or unjust, it is necessary to be able to state that the division of property and the other economic abilities is equally just. Up to the present time the search has been to find the justice or injustice of the distribution of wealth in the manner of determining the price of services.

The assumption of equilibrium gives only a one-sided theory of price. The prices of services at any moment are fixed by a twofold tendency: the tendency to equality, resulting from the removal of the factors of production toward the markets where their services receive the greatest rewards, and the tendency to inequality, resulting from the constant changes which social progress makes in the conditions of equilibrium; and it is difficult to tell which of these tendencies is the stronger. The economic world is constantly rearranging the prices of the different productive services. But the principal function of these prices of services is to promote production; they have a very significant effect on the part of the entire revenue which each individual will receive.

If this theory is correct, every attempt to affect directly—by law, for example—the rate of wages, interest, or rent ought to have an inevitable reaction on the production of wealth. On the contrary, every attempt to affect social conditions of the decision of wealth, the distribution of property, or of the conditions of the struggle for existence can be beneficial. An increased equalization of the conditions of the struggle for existence, in particular, would assure a more favorable distribution of wealth.—Charles Rist, in *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, September, 1907.

E. H. S.

The Problem of the Progress of Law.—The progress of civilization, on the one hand, consists in the perfection of the intellect, feeling, and will of the individual; on the other hand, in a more complete co-ordination and harmony in social life. These elements are the criterion of civilization by which to judge of progress.

The application of this standard to legal institutions shows that there is the same progress in law as in other social phenomena.

From the point of view of form, progress has consisted in an increasing differentiation, individualization, and integration of laws. Public and private laws were gradually separated from the customs, ceremonies, and moral and religious rules.

From the point of view of content, progress consists in the following:

- a) They adapt themselves to a superior form of social organization.
- b) They sanction and protect the independence of the individuals, and the solidarity of the social organism.
- c) They assure to every individual approximate equality in the initial conditions of the social conflict.
- d) They abandon mechanical solidarity to morality; they strengthen the bonds of organic solidarity, and extend their action to new conditions, in controlling retribution and the reciprocal assistance of individuals, and in subordinating them to the state and the society.—Alessandro Gropalli, in *Revue internationale de sociologie*, July, 1907.

E. H. S.

The Rules of the Game.—The rules governing the distribution of wealth and of welfare are man-made rather than natural. Society establishes the rules of the game. As the good or ill fortune of the player depends not only on his skill and means, but also upon the rules of the game and how they are respected, it is worth while to consider the bearing on the social welfare of the various policies that society may pursue.

The non-enforcement of the rules of the game ruptures at last social peace. If saloon and dive bribe themselves free of laws, they not only continue their work of ruin but incidentally the police is corrupted. The real type of law-impotence is failure to enforce the laws governing the conduct of groups or classes in their economic struggle. Into law is injected now the greed of this big concern, now the vengeance of that. This path leads to class war.

Tampering with the rules of the game finally brings the game itself into discredit. Tariff-protected businesses, railroads, public-utility corporations, have captured and operated the machinery of government, have legislated for themselves as a class, have pulled the economic game askew so that one savors a fine irony in calling ours a régime of individualism. The present abysmal inequalities of wealth are an outgrowth of privilege playing into the hands of monopoly and plutocracy.

The conspicuously successful violator of the rules of the game robs us of that which is more precious than gold. He has done worse than extort money from us; he has robbed college young men of ideals. As they saw the power of his money many have left college for the battle of life with the conviction that the ideals of success held up by their instructors were unpractical. The founder of the oil trust may give us back our money, but not if he send among us a hundred Wesleys can he give us back our lost ideals.

Unless rules be enforced, the moral plan will not be lifted simply by adding to the number of righteous men. The plane of competition must be raised by righteous pure-food laws, child-labor restrictions, a stricter ethical code for the legal profession, so that able attorneys will not handle the corporation work,

clean or dirty, just as it comes. Political methods must be raised to a higher plane.

The resistance to the enforcement of righteous rule constantly increases. We declare pipe lines common carriers with the duty to file tariffs, and we get refusals, subterfuges, freak tariffs, etc. Structural improvement of the government causing society to devote an increasing share of its thought and conscience should purify and uphold the rules of the game.—E. A. Ross, *Atlantic*, September, 1907. L. W.

Sinning by Syndicate.—Those who contend that men are growing better, and those who insist that matters are growing worse, may both be right. The key to the paradox is that while men are improving in their personal relations, the control of industry and business is becoming impersonal. The mandate, "Get results," comes from the stockholders and is passed on to the officers and finally to the heads of departments, who must obey or lose their positions. Corporations are often overcapitalized and the misconduct of this giant race of artificial persons deserves consideration by itself. More than other sinning corporate sinning alienates social classes. The syndicate has become a relentless machine and mammon is its master. The directors are economically free. The obscure employees in terror of losing their livelihood may be pushed apparently into deeds of wrong. But, "Blame not the tool, but the hand that moves the tool." The anonymity of the corporation can be met only by fixing on directors the responsibility for corporate sinning. Nothing but the curb of organized society can confine them to their own grist and keep them from grinding into dividends the stamina of children, the health of women, the lives of men, the purity of the ballot, the honor of public servants, and the supremacy of law.—E. A. Ross, in *Atlantic*, October, 1907. L. W.